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**FROM PATRIOTISM TO CRITICAL DEMOCRACY: SHIFTING
DISCOURSES OF CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION IN SOCIAL STUDIES**

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Abstract

Historically social studies curriculum in Australia has been specifically responsible for producing morally correct citizens who desire an appreciation of their duties and responsibilities to the state. This article examines the shifting discourses of citizenship education in social studies since the end of the Second World War. It begins by examining three dominant traditions – patriotism and loyalty, social-scientific inquiry, and active citizenship – before considering the discourse of critical democracy founded on the principles of self-fulfilment, self-determination and equality. Although each perspective begins with a different set of assumptions, values and methodology, all share a common goal of preparing children as future citizens. The question becomes, then, what kind of citizen?

Introduction

The state of citizenship education in Australia continues to attract media attention as evidenced by two recent newspaper headlines ‘Students take apathetic view of democracy’¹ and ‘Teach young about democracy’². These headlines were reporting on the latest findings of the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) on school students’ understanding of democracy. As a part of a 28-nation civics survey, the ACER found half of Australian students had no grasp of democracy (ranking them behind countries like Poland, Cyprus and the Slovak Republic); lacked clarity about the Constitution, elections, voting systems or the role of groups like trade unions; were unwilling to engage in politics; and believed politics was relatively unimportant.

It is interesting to speculate on the reasons for the renewed interest in citizenship education in Australian schools over the past 13 years. Since the release of the Federal Senate reports *Education for Active Citizenship* (1989)³ and *Active Citizenship Revisited* (1991)⁴ we have witnessed considerable activity in the areas of policy, research and curriculum development. The initial Senate report, like the recent ACER findings, expressed concern about the crisis of ignorance and participation in the political processes of Australian society. In response the former Labor Prime Minister Paul Keating established the Civics Expert Group (CEG) and its report *Whereas the People: Civics and Citizenship Education* found a similar ‘low level of understanding

across the community about Australia's system of government and its origins'. The report identified civic education as 'the means to revive interest in Australian history, to form the young and to foster an appreciation of the principles that underpin Australian democracy'.⁵ To this end, the new conservative Coalition Government of Prime Minister John Howard directed \$25 million of the May 1995 budget to support the report's recommendations, in particular the development of curriculum materials for use in lower secondary schools and upper primary schools. On the 8 May 1997, the Federal Minister for Schools, the Hon David Kemp, launched a national civic and citizenship education program *Discovering Democracy* to ensure that all young Australian's 'have a sound knowledge and understanding of our system of government'.⁶

It is not my intent in this article to provide a detailed account of these developments as others have done elsewhere.⁷ Rather, I want to explore the reasons for the renewed interest in citizenship education at this time and at the way in which the emphasis on citizenship represents a calculated response to the dominant conservative views about the nature of schooling and knowledge. As Apple reminds us, we can only begin to make sense of educational reform of this kind in the broader context of the 'conservative restoration' (privatisation, centralisation, vocationalisation and differentiation) advocated by the New Right.⁸ There can be little doubt that we are currently living in a social, political and economic climate dominated by corporate and neo-conservative efforts to shape politics, work, culture and education to serve the interests of capitalism.⁹ In this context, the question becomes, then, whether students are to be inculcated into the dominant ways of looking at the world or whether we are to develop truly democratic spaces within schools and the larger social order?

Historically, the notion of citizenship has been discursively constructed in official education documents to serve dominant social and political interests. In a review of the Western Australian social studies curriculum, Print claimed that 'in any society the young need to be enculturated into the ways of that society and the significant vehicle for attaining that goal is the schooling system, in particular the school curriculum'.¹⁰ Certainly, the prevailing conservative Coalition Government advocates the primary role of schooling 'as being one of 'value-adding' to students, and supplying the labour market with a ready made stream of workers who have prerequisite job skills and

positive attitudes to work'. These attitudes, Reid argues, involve 'a sound work ethic, a love of country, and an understanding and awareness of our history and the structure of our political system'.¹¹ For conservatives, like Prime Minister John Howard, citizenship is seen as a means of supporting economic productivity, nationalism, and conservative morality. Of course, such interpretations are never totalising or uncontested. As Gramsci argues, ideology is 'the terrain on which men [sic] move, acquire consciousness of their position, struggle'.¹² In other words, consciousness is not originally given but 'produced through a socially determined ideological field, so that subjectivity is always the product of social practice'.¹³ In this sense, teachers have the capacity and ingenuity to reshape particular ideologies to serve the interests of themselves and their students in more progressive and democratic ways.¹⁴ For instance, critical democratic conceptions of citizenship attempt to problematise the social and economic structures of society with a view to changing it.¹⁵ According to Beyer, 'the emphasis on critiquing current realities, on participating in the recreation of our worlds, is a central part of a progressive understanding of democracy'. This means focusing on 'the practice of possibility as it may be aided by rediscovering the radical-progressive potential of democratic ideals and values, and democratic participation, in schooling and curriculum'.¹⁶

Against this backdrop, my purpose in this article is twofold. Firstly, I want to examine how different conceptions of citizenship have been historically constructed in social studies education since the end of the Second World War. In this task, I shall draw upon official curriculum documents from my own home state of Western Australia including the *Social and Moral Education Curriculum* (1955)¹⁷ and the *K-10 Social Studies Syllabus* (1981)¹⁸, as well as the nationally inspired *Discovering Democracy* (1997)¹⁹ project. I will also refer to three key national policy reports *Education for Active Citizenship* (1989), *Active Citizenship Revisited* (1991) and *Whereas the People: Civics and Citizenship Education* (1994)²⁰. Emerging from these documents, three dominant discursive patterns or categories are identified for discussion purposes – patriotism and loyalty, social-scientific inquiry, and active citizenship. While acknowledging the limitations of such typologies, they can serve as a useful heuristic device in unearthing dominant ideologies at particular historical moments. I am also mindful of the dangers of writing history through official documents in a seemingly monolithic manner. There is certainly a need to investigate up close the 'localised

complexity' of representations of citizenship portrayed in official curriculum statements. As Ball argues, official policy texts are represented and encoded in complex ways via struggles, comprises, authoritative public interpretations and reinterpretations. These are then decoded via actors' interpretations and meanings in relation to their history, experiences, skills, resources and contexts.²¹ There is important work to be done in this regard, but for now I wish to focus on to the official discursive patterns through which conceptions of citizenship in social studies have been historically constituted. Secondly, I want to consider how a critical democratic conception of citizenship as envisioned by critical pedagogy can provide an ethical alternative to the three dominant traditions identified in official documents. Before proceeding with this analysis, I shall briefly allude to the key theoretical ideas informing this discussion.

A theoretical note

Theoretically, I take as my starting point the view that schooling is a 'social artifact conceived of and made for deliberate human purposes'.²² As well, I use Popkewitz's notion of 'historical social epistemology' to examine the discursive patterns through which the curriculum is constituted and how 'the categories, distinctions, and differentiations employed define the important, the 'real' and the actor'. This means exploring how curriculum knowledge related to categories such as citizenship is linked to ways of 'talking and reasoning in schools - forms by which we 'tell the truth' about ourselves and others - with issues of power and regulation'. In short, I wish to explain the mechanisms via which social studies 'inscribes certain rules through which the individual interprets, organises and acts in the world'.²³

To understand the constitutive power of discourse is to recognise the power of language and the ways in which schools deploy discursive strategies to selectively define what is true. It allows us to illuminate how particular discursive fields connected with schools, impose meaning on reality by defining its nature, purpose and practice.²⁴ According to Green, discourse provides 'the means to meaning, the 'mechanisms' in and by which the social production of meaning ('knowledge' and 'truth') takes place'.²⁵ Foucault argues that every society constructs its own 'regimes of truth' or 'its 'general politics' of truth: that is, the types of discourses which it accepts and makes function as true'.²⁶ Cherryholmes captures this argument well in regard to social studies:

Our descriptions and explanations and what counts as truth in social studies education are subject to the constraints of our profession and our society. In some ways this is obvious. For example, it is clear that many social studies teachers cannot, without a good deal of circumspection and risk, teach about social class inequalities or family planning. It is also well known that social studies textbook publishers avoid such issues.²⁷

In other words, social studies curriculum is not value-neutral, but represents the dominant or hegemonic values of society at particular historical moments.²⁸ An important aspect of hegemony is that it mystifies and conceals existing power relations thus enabling the ideology of the dominant social groups to be construed as commonsense.²⁹ Cherryholmes explains how social studies discourse plays an important political role by ‘controlling potentially explosive situations by choosing theories of knowledge that are safe, theories of language that are value neutral, topics of study that are non-conflictive, and modes of classroom interaction that are controlled’.³⁰ Cherryholmes goes on to elaborate the implications for social studies:

Consequently, we are imprisoned in unexamined social practices and structures. We are caught in a web of unexamined values that permeate our language. If we avoid considering how our discourse structures our lives and the lives of our students, we become like anonymous, nonautonomous puppets uncritically oppressing others or being oppressed, not out of control, not in control, simply controlled.

As a counter, Popkewitz argues that ‘by constructing histories about how our subjectivities are formed (making the agendas and categories of the subject problematic) we can provide a potential space for alternative acts and alternative intentions which are not articulated through the available commonsenses’.³¹ This insight opens the way for the development of what Lather calls ‘curriculum as counter-hegemonic force’.³² By this she means the possibility of building ‘counter-institutions, ideologies, and cultures that provide an ethical alternative to the dominant hegemony, a lived experience of how the world can be different’.³³ I shall return to this theme in the

final section of the article where the discussion shifts to understanding a critical democratic conception of citizenship and the implications for social studies.

The discourse of patriotism and loyalty

In the 1950's, official ideology explicitly encouraged the socialisation of children by inculcating the 'right' values and behaviour such as cooperation, responsibility, patriotism and loyalty. The *Social and Moral Education Curriculum* (1955) stated:

Furthermore, without the general spirit of co-operation, the individual cannot fully realize his possibilities; in other words, he can find the opportunity of a full development of his powers only by co-operating with others: apart from society, the individual is an abstraction. The importance of socialization in any scheme of education is therefore obvious.³⁴

The *Social and Moral Education Curriculum* (1955) elaborated the idea of citizenship education in the following way:

The study of citizenship includes the study of all things which make for public welfare - such as matters of property - personal and public; health - personal and civic; education of the youth; and laws regarding all community adjustments The special aims of citizenship teaching may be enumerated as -

- (1) to inculcate habits of good behaviour and right conduct and foster the spirit of the "Golden Rule";
- (2) to develop in children a sense of social responsibility as a preparation in community and national life; and
- (3) to give children a general knowledge of social institutions and some of the problems of government.³⁵

The emphasis upon patriotism, loyalty and co-operation was in part a response to public concern about Australia's post-war immigration program. To assist the process of economic development after the Second World War, Western Australia encouraged a large number of British and European migrants to the State. Immigrants were an

invaluable source of cheap and mobile labour in Western Australia's push for economic growth. While much of the initial debate on migrants centred on their industrial absorption, educational authorities quickly set about assimilating the new arrivals into society. Hence, the emphasis on fostering the belief that all children must 'work together to encourage a sense of common purpose and social responsibility'.³⁶

Australia's fear of communism and preoccupation with security were other significant influences on the curriculum at the time. The designers of the *Social and Moral Education Curriculum* (1955) believed that education should teach children to 'accept loyalty to their country as a worthy and noble obligation'.³⁷ In other words, schools should reinforce the belief in the superiority of democracy over communism. The President of the Western Australian Teachers' Union, Mr Frank Wallace, clearly expressed the political function of the school curriculum when responding to charges of teacher disloyalty in 1948:

Our curriculum is so framed that in following its teachings our scholars learn the attributes of loyalty and patriotism and have never yet failed to show that they have profited by the lessons given in these subjects.³⁸

The *Social and Moral Education Curriculum* (1955) reinforced the importance of creating a sense of social order by inculcating children with the attitudes and habits of 'truth, responsibility, morality, tolerance and character'. It gave students a 'better appreciation of their expected role within the democratic and Christian fibre of Western Australian society'.³⁹ In 1962, the Acting Director-General of Education Harry Dettman, stated that these values were appropriate in preparing children for their future responsibilities as good citizens and workers.⁴⁰ In the post-war period, educators emphasised the importance of habits and attitudes as powerful determinants of character and behaviour. They believed that schools must take cognisance of them and constantly build up the right attitudes.

The foreword to the *Primary Schools Curriculum* (1955) stated that 'unless children breathe the very spirit of the desirable attitude, it would have little or no positive effect on their development'. These desirable attitudes included co-operation, conservation,

thrift, honesty, industry, sincerity, accuracy, reliability, efficiency, progress, loyalty, neatness, cleanliness, courtesy, open mindedness, and tolerance. The curriculum statement claimed that these industrious attitudes would inevitably ‘attract the attention of the teacher’. In short, the aim of education was to develop these values as social ritual.⁴¹

The history curriculum in particular played a key role in conveying the values of patriotism and citizenship in schools. *The Curriculum for Primary Schools - History* (1951) stated:

If our teaching is of the right sort, the child should acquire an intelligent appreciation of his nation and of its institutions; he should feel a profound gratitude and deep admiration for the men who won for us our liberties and who have made our race eminent in the industrial and scientific world, who have laboured to better the condition of the weak and who have built up the great British Commonwealth of Nations. Such a teaching of history might be expected to inculcate a nobler and truer form of patriotism than that which vaunts past achievements, battles won and victories gained, etc., and laments sorrowfully battles lost: a patriotism that finds expression in a high ideal standard of future conduct.⁴²

The primary school history syllabus focused on the development of the British Empire and the spirit of living together in the modern world. Unfortunately, the breadth of the history syllabus was so large that teachers and students alike spent most of their time reading, summarising and memorising detailed factual information about the triumphs of the British Empire. In developing an appreciation of their heritage and responsibilities, the history syllabus encouraged children to study the special role of heroes and a few heroines so they might better appreciate the ideals of unselfish and devoted service.⁴³ However, as Kennedy points out, the ‘colonial’ conceptualisation of citizenship was ‘based on exclusion, monoculturalism (including monolingualism and a single dominant religion) together with unquestioning ties to Great Britain’.⁴⁴ The beneficiaries of citizenship were white, Anglo-Celtic Australians.⁴⁵

The discourse of social-scientific inquiry

In the late 1970's, official ideology shifted the focus of citizenship to an understanding the social issues of the day through the application of the social-scientific method of inquiry. This approach, apparent in the *K-10 Social Studies Syllabus* (1981), emphasised the importance of developing process skills, evaluative techniques, decision-making and participation in society. The emphasis was upon the discovery and verification of the knowledge contained in each of the social science disciplines and integrated in the social studies curriculum for children.

The designers of the *K-10 Social Studies Syllabus* (1981) were conscious of the rapidly changing nature of Australian society and the implications for teaching the subject. They pointed to the pluralistic nature of the Australian population, the growing diversity of beliefs and practices, the massive changes taking place in the economy, the social impact of technology, and the emergence of new fields of knowledge.⁴⁶ In particular, there was growing concern about the social issues of the day including drugs, violence, the environment, multiculturalism and technology. Curriculum planners were critical of the lack of relevance and scientific rigour contained in the earlier social studies curriculum. For this reason, the *K-10 Social Studies Syllabus* (1981) turned to the conceptual and methodological approach of the social sciences to organise the curriculum. A significant feature being sequential planning based on the content, skills and processes of the social sciences and the valuing process from social education.

While the *K-10 Social Studies Syllabus* (1981) shared the same concerns about cooperation, social harmony and citizenship as the earlier *Social and Moral Curriculum* (1955) it organised the curriculum using a different set of assumptions and values.⁴⁷ The emphasis was on process skills, evaluative techniques, decision-making, participation and social action. The underlying assumption being that ignorance and prejudice created social disharmony and that knowledge generated by the social sciences would better inform students about their role and responsibility to actively participate in the democratic process.

The advocates of this approach believed that the education system could no longer maintain legitimacy through appeal to empire, authority and loyalty. In a technologically complex society, it was necessary to produce a different sort of

democratic citizen one who was flexible, adaptive, reflective and capable of making decisions. The irony, according to Whitty, was ‘that the undue emphasis on teaching the ideas and structures of the social sciences as the cornerstone of critical awareness helped to produce a curriculum that was often less relevant and meaningful to students than the earlier cultural transmission model of citizenship education’.⁴⁸ As a consequence, students perceived social studies to be irrelevant beyond certification value and therefore ‘renounced practical connections and relevance to the personal in favour of the industrial and commercial world’.⁴⁹

The discourse of active citizenship

In the late 1980’s and 1990’s, citizenship education became the subject of much wider political debate. On 23 March 1988, the Australian Senate requested that its Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training (SCEET) conduct an inquiry into education for active citizenship in Australian schools and youth organisations. The report *Education for Active Citizenship* (1989) encouraged schools to provide students with an understanding of how government works, an appreciation of the role of community groups and non-government organisations, and motivation to be active citizens. The Committee expressed concern about the crisis of ignorance and participation in the political processes of Australian society.⁵⁰ The primary aim of the Committee was to develop a sense of political and social harmony in a society confronted with increasing diversity and alienation among young people. These social problems were well documented by Eckersley in *Casualties of Change: The Predicament of Youth in Australia* (1988) which noted an ‘alarming escalation in the social and psychological problems facing young Australians’.⁵¹

Against this background, *Education for Active Citizenship* (1989) set out to develop among young people an appreciation and understanding of how Australian political institutions worked. This meant developing ‘knowledge about how society works, the skills needed to participate effectively, and a conviction that active participation is the right of all citizens’.⁵² The active citizenship approach to political education sought to create ‘a more complex and sustained effort’ at political education than the old-style civics approach. This involved creating a broad strategy of political education that went beyond the academic syllabus to include teacher education, the provision of adequate

resources, the role of youth organisations and a national program in education for citizenship directed at the whole community.⁵³

The stimulus for this renewed interest in citizenship education came in the national policy initiative contained in the *Hobart Declaration on Schooling* ratified by the Australian Education Council (AEC) in 1989. The *Common and Agreed National Goals for Schooling in Australia* (1991) agreed:

To develop knowledge, skills, attitudes and values which will enable students to participate as active and informed citizens in our democratic Australian society within an international context.⁵⁴

The Western Australian Ministry of Education responded to the increasing emphasis on social competence, social action and active citizenship by stating that:

These areas will be a focus for development in the Western Australian social studies curriculum during this decade In addition, while recognizing that we live in a changing and multicultural society, Western Australia will place increasing emphasis on promoting basic, democratic values.⁵⁵

In 1994, the Civics Expert Group report *Whereas the People*, identified civic education as the means to revive interest in Australian history, to form the young and to foster an appreciation of the principles that underpin Australian Democracy. In 1998, the Commonwealth Government launched a national civic and citizenship education program entitled *Discovering Democracy*. The stated purpose was to equip students with 'knowledge of the history and operations of Australia's political and legal systems and institutions and of the principals that underpin Australian democracy. It also required the development of skills and an appreciation of the values and attitudes that enabled effective participation in civic life'.⁵⁶

Like the earlier approaches to citizenship, the emphasis was on developing responsible citizens who had certain core knowledge and understandings about Australia's heritage, its democratic processes and government, its judicial system and its system of public

administration. It required students to exhibit the skills necessary for informed and effective participation. The stated aims of the program included the development of 'personal character traits, such as respecting individual worth and human dignity, empathy, respect for the law, being informed about public issues, critical mindedness and willingness to express points of view, listen, negotiate and compromise'.⁵⁷

According to Moroz, the implementation of the *Discovery of Democracy* materials in schools has been uneven and largely ineffective for a number of reasons including: a lack of clarity about the meaning of civics and citizenship education; lack of teacher enthusiasm; reliance on 'chalk-talk' teacher-centred approaches; and student cynicism.⁵⁸ Robison and Parkin believe the approach is fundamentally flawed because of its over-emphasis on history at the expense of other disciplines; the heavy emphasis on content; the failure to address non-mainstream issues; and its failure to engage students in a meaningful way.⁵⁹

In liberal democracies such as Australia, citizenship usually means responsibilities rather than rights.⁶⁰ The emphasis is upon law-abiding behaviour, service to the community and the national interest. With rising levels of youth unemployment, increasing levels of youth alienation in the 1980s and 1990s, and the electoral success of the conservative Howard Government, citizenship education became an important means of maintaining the hegemony of corporate capitalism.⁶¹ As Kinchloe observes, one of the most important goals of public life over the last few decades has been the cultivation of 'more social obedience and commonness of purpose and less democracy and liberty'.⁶²

The discourse of critical democracy

Against this backdrop, I want to move on to consider how a critical democratic conception of citizenship as envisioned by critical pedagogy can provide an ethical alternative to the three traditions considered so far.⁶³ As Fien points out, 'Planning a political education curriculum to foster participation in 'personal politics' and 'community politics' is a fundamentally different task from planning a curriculum to promote participation in 'party politics' and 'representative democracy''.⁶⁴ Carr too, contends that a moral approach to citizenship is not so much concerned with institutional politics, but the political expression of the values of self-fulfilment, self-

determination and equality. In his view, democracy is moral to the extent that it prescribes principles for evaluating social relationships, political institutions and cultural practices of societies founded on democratic values and ideals.⁶⁵ Goodman encapsulates these sentiments in the notion of critical democracy:

As a form of associative living, critical democracy implies a significant expansion of participation within both public and private realms of society. Critical democracy also implies a moral commitment to promote values of economic and social justice and actively inhibit sexism, racism, classism, ethnocentrism and other forms of oppression.⁶⁶

Given the discursive hegemony of the three traditions of citizenship outlined in previous sections, we should hardly be surprised by the lack of critical teaching in Australian schools today. As Print points out, such discussions are largely confined to the academic literature and although there have been renewed debates in relation to gender⁶⁷, ethnicity⁶⁸ and Indigenous people⁶⁹ they have largely failed to affect teachers and schools. For this reason, I would like to conclude by considering how critical pedagogy can help teachers to rebuild forms of ‘moral discourse and action and in recreating genuine communities’.⁷⁰ According to Burbules and Berk (1999, p. 47) critical pedagogy ‘is preoccupied with social injustice and how to transform inequitable, undemocratic, or oppressive institutions and social relations’.⁷¹ Giroux and Simon argue that the discourse of pedagogy attempts to influence the production of identities within a particular set of social relations. Pedagogy is a practice through which people acquire a certain ‘moral character’. According to them, it organises:

... a view of how a teacher’s work within an institutional context specifies a particular version of what knowledge is of most worth, in what direction we should desire, what it means to know something, and how we might construct representations of ourselves, others, and our physical and social environment ... It is in this sense that to propose a pedagogy is to construct a political vision.⁷²

To this end, critical pedagogy seeks to understand how teachers and students give meaning to their lives through the ‘complex historical, cultural and political forms that they both embody and produce’. According to Giroux, critical pedagogy examines how ‘teachers and students account for who they are and present different readings of the world’. Significantly, he argues, it is a discourse that is attentive to the ‘histories, dreams and experiences that students bring to school’.⁷³ Drawing on Fine, this means giving voice to students own concerns using history, political science and other social sciences to make sense of their own lives.⁷⁴ McLaren puts it well:

In sum, what a critical pedagogy of language and experience attempts to do is to provide students with “counter-discourses” or “resistant subject positions”s - in short, with a new language of analysis - through which they can assume a critical distance from their familiar subject positions in order to engage in a cultural praxis better designed to further the project of social transformation.⁷⁵

Ladson-Billings argues that the dilemma facing critical pedagogy is how to get teachers ‘who have been educated in and inducted into patterns of tradition and hierarchy - that reproduce inequality - to teach in critical, emancipatory ways’.⁷⁶ In this task, Darder (1995, p. 328) warns that ‘critical pedagogy is not a technique, model, framework or recipe for educational practice. Instead, it posits a set of principles for the enactment of an emancipatory classroom culture grounded in the principles of democratic schooling’. Gay identifies these principles as: ‘critical dialogue, representative voice, resistance to domination and oppression, emancipatory pedagogy, knowledge as power, social reconstruction and transformation, the democratization of the educational process, pluralism without hierarchy, counterhegemony, and the legitimacy of subjective realities’.⁷⁷

How these principles are translated into classroom practice is a key challenge for critical pedagogy. As Goodman points out, ‘Critical scholars need to take the time and make the effort to directly and explicitly address the question of how individuals or groups of people can potentially act within educational settings to advance their ideals’.⁷⁸ Goodman himself suggests the importance of creating a ‘discourse of imagery’ or ‘theoretical language that is informed by and rooted in images of real (or

hypothesized) people involved in tangible actions that take place in believable settings'. This visual portrayal, he argues, provides teachers and others interested in critical pedagogy with an opportunity to learn through vicarious experience.⁷⁹

For example, The Education for Social Justice Research Group comprising of the South Australian Institute of Teachers (SAIT), the University of South Australia, the Department for Education and Student Services and the Catholic Education Office developed a 'Teaching for Resistance' approach which set out 'to engage young people as informed, skilled and active participants in the struggle for social justice in their society and specifically in the struggle against sexism, racism and poverty'.⁸⁰ Eight schools, twenty six teachers and five hundred students were involved in the project. Teachers and students worked together to identify and act on issues of concern such as: Writing as Resistance to Racism, Gender and the Division of Labour, The Politics of Sugar, Racism and Land, and Sexism in Church Language. The Teaching for Resistance approach involved three essential elements:

- *Raising consciousness*: to raise, extend and deepen student awareness of the social justice issue at the centre of resistance struggles against a particular form of oppression;
- *Making contact*: for students to become aware of the range of groups in the community engaged in resisting injustice; aware of their understanding of the nature and causes of injustice and the strategies they employ; and
- *Taking action*: the purpose of this phase is to enable the students to select, plan and take strategic actions to resist the injustice, preferably in liaison with community.⁸¹

In the same tradition, Smyth, Shacklock and Hattam advocate an Australian critical cultural studies approach to teaching which 'provides a way of looking at the cultural complexity of daily life and the diversity of cultural artefacts and texts which inform, limit and enable understandings and actions of people as independent and social actors in Australian society'.⁸² This approach, they argue, invites 'a critical exposure and interpretation of relationships people form with everyday cultural effects like work, sport, music, school, printed text, television, cinema, art, theatre, consumer goods, advertising, and fashion'.⁸³ Pedagogically, students and teachers co-author the school

curriculum around ‘generative’ themes from everyday life (eg fashion, romance, Madonna), ‘topical’ themes that have local, national or international significance (eg peace, Aboriginal reconciliation, guns) or ‘academic’ themes that lie in traditional disciplines (eg multiculturalism, air quality, information technology). In short, Smyth, Shacklock and Hattam advocate a critical cultural studies that is ‘transdisciplinary, multiperspectival and dialogic’.⁸⁴ Smyth summarises the essence of what is involved in critical teaching that emerges from everyday life:

- teachers engaging students with questions that have relevance beyond the classroom;
- working with students in ways that enable them to delve more deeply into content that is normally presented to them;
- schools and teachers operating in other than individual and competitive ways and creating forms of shared responsibility and community;
- changing of mind-sets and orientations rather than using 'how-to-do-it' approaches;
- listening to voices that originate within classrooms;
- using personal experience as a starting point and source of knowledge;
- students themselves becoming important sources of theorizing about learning;
- focusing on how power is reproduced through structures and forms of language; and
- encouraging the translation of democratic processes pursued inside the classroom into venues outside.⁸⁵

In opposition to traditional conceptions of citizenship that serve to reinforce certainty, conformity, and technical control of knowledge and power, critical teaching of the kind advocated by Smyth, Shacklock and Hattam and others, explicitly embraces a set of principles for the enactment of an emancipatory classroom culture. Common to such approaches is a way of thinking about human beings, culture, knowledge, social power, and the world.⁸⁶ Unlike conservative conceptions of education that claim to be neutral and apolitical, Smyth, Shacklock and Hattam argue that education needs to adequately equip citizens to do certain things:

- To interrupt and interrogate the images created *for* and *by* ourselves;

- To ask who is doing the representing of our Australian culture, why, and with what motives in mind;
- To engage with those who would construct us through images, idioms, and icons in certain ways, and not in other ways; and
- To debate, contest and re-define how we wish to express the relationships in the various cultural forms and identities we are prepared to accept as constituting a uniquely Australian culture.⁸⁷

Conclusion

As larger numbers of children moved into the school system after the Second World War it was necessary to find more efficient pedagogical practices to produce morally correct citizens who desired an appreciation of their duties and responsibilities to the state. To this end, the early *Social and Moral Education Curriculum* (1955) emphasised the importance of establishing the child's loyalty to the State through a variety of social rituals such as royal visits, patriotic songs, orderliness, respect for authority, punctuality, obedience, and hard work. With the introduction of the *K-10 Social Studies Syllabus* (1981) and the *Discovering Democracy* (1998) project, the discourse of citizenship shifted from patriotism and loyalty to encompass the social-scientific method of inquiry and active citizenship respectively. While there were differences of emphasis in regard to the nature, content and processes of social studies, educational authorities agreed that the self-regulatory child who was conscious of his/her social obligations was of infinitely greater value to society than the child who had to be coerced.

As noted in the introduction, it would be misleading to suggest that citizenship is all encompassing and uncontested. As Carnoy and Levin (1985) point out, there is a perpetual tension and conflict between the imperatives of capitalism and democracy with both dynamics attempting to influence the control, purpose and operation of schools. On the one hand, schools must meet the needs of a rapidly changing economy by reproducing workers with the appropriate skills, behaviour and values of the workplace. On the other hand, schools must satisfy the imperatives of democracy for greater participation and equal opportunity for all children irrespective of class, race and gender.⁸⁸

Viewed in this way, citizenship education can be a powerful ideological weapon in shaping and forming children as either desired workers and citizens in the pragmatic interests of capital or critically informed citizens committed to social justice and the politics of transformation. The danger is that traditional conceptions of citizenship encapsulated in the discourse of patriotism and loyalty, social-scientific inquiry, and active citizenship ultimately serve to lull people into a ‘frightening slumber’ or ‘democratic sleep’ that allows monied interests to dominate.⁸⁹ According to Chomsky there is a ‘manufacture of consent’⁹⁰ leading to a depoliticised citizenry marked by apathy and cynicism or what Macedo describes as ‘literacy for stupidification’.⁹¹

This is not to suggest, however, that curriculum reforms such as the active citizenship approach are without positive moments and possibilities.⁹² Rather, my central argument is that if we are going to build a truly democratic society it is essential that we not only understand the mechanisms via which school knowledge (re)produces particular cultural forms that benefit some individuals and groups over others, but are able to create an alternative vision or ‘social imagination’⁹³ based on the values of economic and social justice and equity, compassion, civic responsibility, democratic participation, universal respect for the individual and the formation of solidaristic human associations.⁹⁴ In this project, a critical democratic conception of citizenship provides not only an ethical alternative to the three dominant traditions considered in this article, but a set of principles and strategies for teachers interested in creating a more emancipatory classroom culture. Critical teaching of the kind encapsulated in the ‘teaching for resistance’ and ‘Australian cultural studies’ models demonstrates how teachers might begin to theoretically and practically go about reconceptualising a more just and democratic approach to citizenship in Australian schools.

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